

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) issued the following statement after receiving assurance that the Department of Transportation decided to formally set aside 20 pairs of slots at LaGuardia and 14 pairs of slots at Reagan Washington National for new entrants and limited incumbent carriers. The decision should make it easier for, low-cost carriers to provide service along the east coast, especially to areas like Western New York. The announcement came this afternoon after Slaughter spoke with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood about the issue.

"I knew that there was no way it would be good for consumers to allow a significant swapping of slots between Delta Airlines and US Airways without insisting on some provisions to protect competition and consumers," Slaughter said. "I immediately raised my concerns with Secretary LaHood and other officials and I am very pleased today to see that they share my determination to see competition preserved. In this era of consolidation and airline mergers, we must take every step possible to maintain competition. By setting aside 14 pairs of slots at Reagan National and 20 pairs of slots at LaGuardia Airport for new entrants, we are making it much more likely that people in rural and smaller communities will have better options for low-cost flights."

Slaughter and other members have worked to increase competition for a variety of reasons, including the following:

- Airfares have skyrocketed. From 2000 to 2009, unrestricted fares from DCA to Buffalo and Rochester have increased 100 and 242 percent respectively while traffic in these the DCA markets has fallen by 56 and 52 percent respectively. Compare this to the Syracuse-New York City market, where since a low fare carrier entered the market in 2001 passenger traffic has increased by 27 percent while average one-way fares have fallen 16 percent.
- Competition lowers cost. Today the average one way fare between Buffalo and DCA is 40 percent more expensive than at Dulles International Airport and an unconscionable 128 percent higher than at Baltimore/Washington Airport. When low-cost carriers are allowed in, prices fall.
- Low-cost carriers are already present in Western New York. Already the Greater Rochester International Airport services AirTran, and JetBlue Airways. The Buffalo-Niagara International Airport services AirTran, JetBlue Airways, and Southwest.

Slaughter has long been a champion of low-cost airlines coming into Rochester and Buffalo. Nearly ten years ago she helped JetBlue acquire slots needed to fly between Upstate New York and New York City. This lowered fares in Upstate over night, launched JetBlue, and convinced other low-cost carriers to serve our region.

In January, Slaughter wrote [a letter to Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and Federal Aviation Administrator Randy Babbitt](#) asking that the transaction not go through without a consideration for low-cost carriers. She was joined by Upstate New York Congressman Bill Owens (NY-23) and Congressmen James Oberstar and Jerry Costello, Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Chairman on the Subcommittee on Aviation respectively.